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ABSTRACT

Analyzed and related to the education of gifted children is the role of the mentor as seen in the writings of Castaneda. The mentor/pupil relationship is illustrated in the sorcerer and the apprentice. Characteristics of the mentor's art (such as teaching from the world to the student) and of the pupil (such as a willingness to experience) are discussed. A final section focuses on the following implications for gifted child education: rooting mentor programs in experiential learning, matching mentor with pupil, allowing for openended programs, and basing instruction and evaluation on competencies rather than norms. (DE)

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THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE:

A Case Study in the Role of the Mentor

by

Bruce O. Boston

ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children
The Council for Exceptional Children

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The Sorcerer's Apprentice:

A Case Study in the Role of the Mentor

Introduction

While special provisions for educating the gifted and talented are a comparatively recent educational development, these provisions have given us the impetus for a reexamination of what is perhaps the longest lived pedagogical relationship -- that of the mentor with the student. In the search for creative educational environments, coordinators of gifted and talented programs have turned to skilled persons in their communities in an attempt to find individuals who will share their interest, commitment and expertise with youngsters on a one-to-one basis. Mentors are increasingly being recruited from the fine and the applied arts, from the professions, among hobbyists and performers, tradespeople and teachers. Generally the idea of these programs is to provide students with a "protected" relationship in which learning and experimentation can occur, potential skills can be developed, and in which results can be measured in terms of competencies gained rather than curricular territory covered.

Despite general agreement among gifted educators on the importance and significance of the mentor, surprisingly little has been written about the mentor-student relationship.* Despite the repeated statements of eminent and successful members of our society that there has been a direct correlation between their own achievements and the influence of a "mentor" in their development, the role, characteristics and modalities of mentoring have been given little, if any, systematic examination by the educational community. The present essay is an attempt to begin to fill this gap, and to offer the beginnings of an outline of mentoring.

* In fact, a search of the Library of Congress card catalogue under the subject heading "Mentor" turned up nothing.

Origins of the Mentor

The concept and role of the mentor come directly to us from ancient Greece. In the Odyssey, Mentor was the faithful friend of Odysseus, the King of Ithica, entrusted by Odysseus with the care of his household during his absence during the Trojan War. Above and beyond this general responsibility, however, Mentor was the guardian and tutor of Telemachus, Odysseus' son. The goddess Athena assumed Mentor's form and accompanied Telemachus in the search for Odysseus after the war, acting as guide and offering prudent advice.

Instructive as a full treatment of Homer might be in regard to Mentor, three points stand out without an extensive exegesis. These may serve as background for the case study in this paper. First, it is instructive to note that Mentor exercised his tutorial function within the context of a wider range of responsibility, i.e., the care of Odysseus' household. While perhaps not Homer's intention for his readers, we can see mentoring portrayed here as a derived rather than as a primary function, something that is taken care of while the full press of other business is attended to.

The second thing to note is that Mentor functions as a channel for guidance and wisdom which comes from beyond him. He is not its source, but its servant. We need not take this to mean that for us the mentor is a religious intermediary but, in a more general sense, functions as a "spiritual guide" and as a kind of gatekeeper to a larger world beyond. Put somewhat differently, what the mentor transmits is not exclusively his or her own. It is something like a tradition or a value system to which s/he has access and for which s/he is willing to serve as a conduit and speaker.

Without overburdening Homer's text, we may perhaps add a third point which indicates another characteristic of the mentor. Mentor is presented as the companion in Telemachus' quest for his father, during which he comes into his own adulthood. Thus, we may think of the mentor as a companion to the pupil as

s/he moves toward the responsibility of adulthood, offering encouragement, advice, and the wisdom of the adult world. By adulthood we are not specifically referring to chronological age, but to a level of experience and competence which demonstrates that the pupil is ready to "take on" the world at large on his/her own terms rather than simply imitating those of the mentor. The pupil becomes a Subject, capable of speaking his or her own word in the world.

I.

The Sorcerer and the Apprentice

One of the most fascinating contemporary descriptions of the mentor/pupil relationships has been provided by Carlos Castaneda. His series of four books detailing his protracted apprenticeship to the Yaqui Indian brujo or sorcerer, Juan Matus, have become counter culture classics, in large part because of their vivid descriptions (and seeming legitimation) of hallucinogenic drug experiences and because of Castaneda's compelling explication of "non-ordinary reality."

Castaneda, a UCLA graduate student, first encountered don Juan in 1960, having sought him out as a potential resource for his anthropological research into the uses of psychotropic plants in Mexican Indian religion and culture.* A 14 year relationship ensued during which the anthropologist became an apprentice in sorcery and finally, we are led to believe, a sorcerer himself. Mind-boggling and arresting as Castaneda's descriptions of non-ordinary reality are at their own level, they are not of primary interest here. At another level, the relationship of don Juan to Carlos as teacher to pupil commands our attention, for it is an excellent paradigm of the central concern of this paper. Thus, readers need not be put off by the eccentric nature of the field of inquiry -- sorcery -- but are invited to attend to the teaching and learning styles exhibited by don Juan and Castaneda. An additional caveat is that the high level of mentorship exhibited by

*Castaneda's doctoral dissertation subsequently appeared as Journey to Ixtlan. The other books in the series are The Teachings of Don Juan, A Separate Reality, and Tales of Power.

don Juan should not be taken as the norm for all mentors. Don Juan has been chosen not because he is average but because he represents a distillation of ideal possibilities to which mentors can aspire.

Moreover, this is simply one case study of many such relationships which could be examined from history: Socrates/Plato; Jesus/Apostles; Aristotle/Alexander the Great; Anne Sullivan/Helen Keller; Staupitz/Luther; Freud/Jung; etc. Such studies may prove productive of other qualities and characteristics of mentoring not brought out here. Much more work is needed before a full typology is likely to emerge. What is offered here is a first step along what I believe to be a promising road.

Don Juan, the mentor, is a Yaqui Indian in his seventies, living near Sonora, Mexico. He is at once a compelling and a forbidding personage. He is himself what he sets out to train Carlos to become: an "impeccable warrior." As a person, don Juan has a reassuring manner, a superb sense of humor, is very agile physically, and shows a remarkable consistency in his actions. He is supremely aware of his surroundings and able to use all aspects of his environment to gain, store and exercise what he calls "personal power." He is very observant, not only of the physical environment but also of the attitudes, behaviors and dispositions of people. He is highly conscious of his status as an Indian, remarkably wise in his treatment of his pupil, and possesses the humility that only supreme self-confidence can provide.

Castaneda's character is often portrayed as a contrast to don Juan's. He is first and foremost a questioner. At the beginning of their relationship, the credentialed graduate student is often condescending toward the old man, treating him as an eccentric. He is highly rational, to the point that his attempts to force fit his experiences under don Juan's guidance into a logical frame of reference constitute a block to learning. He is easily frustrated, often angry

and afraid, and betrays his insecurities at every turn. He is variously recalcitrant, disbelieving, self-indulgent, frightened, curious, open, brave, clumsy, insightful, and (so it sometimes seems) almost perversely dense.

The Apprenticeship

The apprenticiship begins on a note of disharmony. Castaneda is seeking a local "informant" to provide him with detailed information about psychotropic plants, particularly peyote, for his anthropological research. But when he meets don Juan, the old man "sees" him as an apprentice somehow sent to him by "power." It is not until much later that Castaneda learns that his interest in hallucinogenic plants was used by don Juan to "trick" him into the apprenticeship proper). Don Juan agrees to become an informant and subsequently introduces Castaneda into the world of visions provided by "Mescalito," his term for peyote. Castaneda's experiences under the influence of the drug are used by don Juan as touchstones for the elaboration of a whole new world of "non-ordinary reality," governed by its own set of conventions. The central purpose of Castaneda's first book, The Teachings of Don Juan, is the systematization of this non-ordinary reality according to its own logic, built around the uses and effects of the drugs.

By this point, however, Castaneda has reached a crossroads. He realizes that to continue with don Juan requires a commitment (he believes it to be the continuation of the use of the drugs, the consequences of which are too terrifying to him) which he is unwilling to make in order to become a "man of knowledge." He breaks off the apprenticeship, only to resume two years later, but this time on a different basis. In the last stages of the apprenticeship, Castaneda explores much more deeply other aspects of non-ordinary reality which he had earlier assumed to be side issues, but which he now learns are central to don Juan's world view. These include "seeing" (as opposed to "looking"), "dreaming," "splitting," and the creation of the double of one's self, "hunting power,"

"stopping the world," "the totality of oneself," and other skills of the "impeccable warrior."

Finally, through the assistance of a sorcerer friend of don Juan's, don Genaro, Castaneda is introduced to the deepest mysteries of sorcery. He learns how to live by means of balancing two centers of power: reason (by which he has been heretofore victimized) and will, the sorcerer's chief tool. He learns to travel effectively and impeccably between the two arenas within which reason and will are exercised: the tonal, which roughly corresponds to the normal, everyday world that we know, and the nagual, or the unknown realm which exists beyond the threshold of death, but which is accessible on this side of death. The sorcerer's task, he learns, is to live a life of struggle, to be free of the restricting conventions and logic of the tonal, while he lives in it, and thus be capable of performing extraordinary feats in the sensible world. But he also learns to travel into and witness the nagual, the abode of power, where none of the tonal's rules apply. Parts II and III of Tales of Power describe, in vivid detail, the last steps of preparation for his final, incredible leap into this realm of the unknown.

Castaneda's four books are a remarkable tour de force, both in terms of their literary power and the glimpses they provide us of an utterly alien, but no less real, world. No less remarkable is the inferential knowledge we can gain here about the pedogogial relationship between mentor and pupil. Having looked at the backdrop of Castaneda's apprenticeship, we are now prepared to look more closely at various aspects of the mentoring which occurred and to see what implications they have for the education of the gifted and talented.

II.

Characteristics of the Mentor-Pupil Relationship

A study of Castaneda's work reveals that there are three basic groupings

of characteristics to don Juan's pedagogical style: (1) general characteristics or, more properly, norms to which both mentor and pupil subscribe, (2) what is expected of the pupil, and (3) the responsibilities of the mentor. Each of these will be examined in turn, and we will then make some concluding remarks about mentorship in the context of gifted child education.

1. General Characteristics

The mentor and the pupil are both servants of a tradition. No relationship at all is possible without this assumption, even though it may not be clearly articulated at the outset. At the beginning, Castaneda was unaware that don Juan was a sorcerer, although he very soon heard rumors to that effect. (Sorcery is something of a special case in this regard, since it is by its nature somewhat mysterious and clandestine). But don Juan very clearly understands himself as a brujo, a "warrior" and "man of knowledge." He is an inheritor of teachings and most particularly of a life-style which it is his duty to pass on. He has another pupil besides Castaneda. During the course of the books we meet other sorcerers, e.g., don Genaro, who in turn have apprentices. It is clear that there is a community of interest which has historical dimensions.

The tradition of which don Juan and don Genaro are heirs has to do with the relationship of men to "power," which is never clearly defined, only understood through experience. The sorcerer is both the master and the servant of power, i.e., he learns the skills of mastery in a trade-off with "power" in return for his being put to use by it. The whole affair is rather like living with a wild beast which condescends to be tamed. You can make it sit up and beg for its dinner, but you never know whether or not you might be on the menu.

The tradition itself is made up of two parts, lore and structure. The lore consists mainly of techniques for encountering, mastering, manipulating, and eventually succumbing to power in the act of death. There are rules of conduct and for interacting with various elements of the environment (such as always

apologizing to the plants, leaves and herbs one gathers in order to tap into their "power" for purposes of sorcery or day to day life). Don Juan also teaches Castaneda to sit, run and walk according to special criteria.

The structure of the tradition is clearly hierarchical. The apprentice is subordinate to the sorcerer. Among sorcerers there is a certain parity (certainly there is mutual respect) and each follows what don Juan calls his own "predilection," or the bent of his nature. Not all have the same skills; there is an unequal facility in dealing with "power." There is also a prescribed series of stages through which one posses to become a sorcerer: apprentice - "man of knowledge" - sorcerer. In dealing with the tonal, the apprentice (Castaneda) has his "teacher" (don Juan), but his learning about the nugual is entrusted to his "benefactor" (for Castaneda this role was played by don Genaro).

It is clear from don Juan's instruction to Castaneda that the servant role, as I have called it, is crucial to the instruction itself. Don Juan often warns his apprentice not to "fool around," to be on his guard against attacks on his accumulating "personal power" by forces larger and more powerful than himself, to show himself as "impeccable," to do things this way and not that way, etc.

This general characteristic of servanthood to a larger realm of knowledge, cause, power, or frame of reference marks the mentor-pupil relationship as a whole. The artist introduces his student to Art, the musician to Music, the lawyer to The Law. Graduation and ordination ceremonies are formalized rites de passage which symbolize the crossing of a double barrier in this regard. Not only do they symbolize the right of the apprentice/pupil to practice the tradition in his/her own right, they also mark the point beyond which the apprentice/pupil is entitled to maintain an unmediated relationship with the larger realm into which s/he has been trained. By submitting to the disciplines and canons of this larger realm, the pupil is then entitled to exhibit mastery, with the knowledge

that arrival is always pen-ultimate. Sorcerers die but "power" continues. Lawyers try cases but The Law perdures. Cubism, animism and abstract expression come and go, but Art remains.

Both mentor and pupil share a commitment to the truth of the tradition being communicated. This is the point at which Castaneda had his greatest difficulties. His categories for perceiving, processing and evaluating the reality which he experienced under don Juan's tutelage were simply inadequate to the task. Many things which he saw don Juan and don Genaro do, (e.g., don Juan once willed Castaneda's car not to start, changed his own physical appearance, transported them both great distances in the wink of an eye; don Genaro "leaped" to the top of a mountain, walked up the trunk of a tree with his body parallel to the ground) were utterly unbelievable by any conventional standards.

Don Juan's greatest task was to jar Castaneda out of his normal modes of perception and thought processes to convince him of the reality and truth of another world altogether. The outlandish feats alluded to above were heuristic devices designed to accomplish this task, although Castaneda was unaware of it at the time. Don Juan's constant replies to his apprentice's questions are "Yes, this is true, but not in the way you think." "Yes that did happen, but not in the way you are accustomed to think of things as happening." "You think too much."

In the end, Castaneda simply had to give himself over, largely because aspects of the teaching he was receiving which he could understand in conventional terms bore fruit in his everyday life. What he was unable to integrate he could neither deny nor explain in his own terms, so that he had to commit himself to their truth according to another set of terms. The second cycle of apprenticeship, described in the last three books,* concentrated on developing the ability

*This is not strictly true. Journey to Ixtlan is a recapitulation of the time period of The Teaching of Don Juan in which Castaneda relates what don Juan was "really" trying to teach him the first time around and which had seemed incidental to the experiences undergone with peyote.

to "see," i.e., a very complex process by means of which a man of knowledge could perceive the essence of things in the world of the tonal. Castaneda did "see," just enough to pique his interest, and finally, like his mentor, entered into a commitment to a Wholly Other tradition.

The central issue here is that in order for the mentor-pupil relationship to work, to do what it is supposed to do, a commitment is necessary. Interest, curiosity, eagerness and earnestness are all important, but not sufficient, either singly or together. What seems to count in the last analysis is the risk, the commitment. This risk to the truth of a tradition is not a risk to propositional truth, but to the truth which becomes true by virtue of having experienced it. I am reminded here of a statement of Franz Rosenzweig, the Jewish philosopher: "...truth ceases to be what 'is' true and becomes a verity that wants to be verified in active life" (See Nahum N. Glatzer (ed.), Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought, New York: Schocken Books, 1961, p. 206). The sense that the tradition makes and the meaning it provides are participated in by the pupil under the guidance of the mentor, and gradually the pupil moves to the same level of investment as the mentor. The pupil is "in the way of being committed" in something of the same way as he acquires the lore, techniques and competencies of the traditon he has chosen to identify with.

To highlight this process of accretion is not to minimize the disjunctive character of the commitment or risk involved, however. For Castaneda it became necessary to make a clear break with one Weltanschauung and to identify himself with another. The view taken here is that such a break on the part of the pupil is necessary to the success of the mentor/pupil relationship regardless of the tradition involved. Otherwise the teaching-learning situation falls prey to one of two maladies: either the mentor's teaching remains fanciful because the pupil has no way of identifying with it or the pupil remains forever a dilettante.

Special cases require special circumstances. One of the things which eventually began to puzzle Castaneda was why don Juan was willing to entrust his tradition to a non-Indian. Upon confrontation with the question, don Juan was able to reply that while Castaneda's non-Indian status was somewhat detrimental to his ability to learn (all that Western education simply got in the way!), "power" had revealed that he should be apprenticed. Put differently, the tradition selects its own through the sensitivities of its agents even in the face of disqualifying elements. Parallel instances are provided by the Bible, which tells us, for example, that Mathew was called to discipleship by Jesus despite his status as a hated tax-collector; the Magdalen was favored despite the fact that she was a prostitute; Moses offers a series of excuses to beg off his call to leadership.

Cases alter circumstances in the teaching-learning process as well. Even though Castaneda's intellectual and academic training proved a stumbling block more often than not, don Juan repeatedly tries to respond to his questions. The interchanges between the mentor and the pupil in this regard seem to follow a fairly regular pattern:

(1) Castaneda has an experience which he asks don Juan to interpret.

(2) Don Juan responds, but in his own terms rather than in Castaneda's.

(3) Castaneda seeks clarification in his own terms.

(4) Don Juan attempts a further reply in Castaneda's terms, but warns of their inadequacy, saying in effect, "If this is the only way you can get it, I suppose I shall have to give it to you this way" (Tales of Power, p. 226).

(5) Castaneda presses further, still using his own conceptual frame of reference.

(6) Don Juan finally despairs and resorts to (a) diversion, usually in the form of humor, (b) shutting off the conversation by refusing to

discuss the matter further, (c) telling Castaneda that he indulges himself by thinking too much and that instead of talking he should act.

Castaneda comes to realize that don Juan is right, that until and unless he is able to enter into the mentor's frame of reference, sense will not come. The sorcerer allows his own pedagogical instincts to be violated for the apprentice's sake, but always with the end in mind that the different frame of reference be upheld. Similarly, don Juan allows Castaneda to take copious notes on everything said and done, but he laughs at him for doing it because note-taking has nothing to do with becoming a "man of knowledge." Don Juan condescends to it only because Castaneda insists on its necessity for him to understand don Juan's teaching.

An excellent illustration of cases altering circumstances is revealed to Castaneda by don Juan in the latter's recapitulation of the way he directed the apprenticeship (Tales of Power, pp. 225-254). He tells Castaneda that he had deliberately misaligned the focus of the apprentice's attention from the ultimate goal of the apprenticeship ("arriving at the totality of oneself") by encouraging the use of power plants. (See also Journey to Ixtlan, pp. 7-8).

Recent research on learning styles seems to validate what don Juan knows instinctively, that unless the teacher allows the pupil to learn in a way that is most comfortable to him, learning is blocked. The point is that learning modalities are extrinsic rather than intrinsic to the material being learned, and while the mentor may have better criteria of appropriateness, pupil preferences as to modes of learning are best used to full advantage while other, more appropriate modes are introduced and strengthened. In the end, if Castaneda's experience is any guide, some kind of accommodation is reached between teaching and learning styles. A new style takes shape, in this case marked by the incongruous but parallel facts that a phenomenon as recalcitrant as the sorcerer's secret gets

out into print!

The relationship between mentor and pupil is privileged. There are two sources for this privilege. One is the tradition itself which lays down boundaries within which the outside world is not allowed to intrude. In Castaneda's case, it was he who was admitted to the apprenticeship and not don Juan's nephew, because of the latter's disqualifying characteristics. Don Juan would tell things to Castaneda and help him in a way that was disallowed with his own family. Any tradition requires such an inside and an outside in order to be able to retain its unique character, its strength, and its perpetuation. Within these bounds, both mentor and pupil are free to operate according to the norms of the tradition and not according to the more generalized rules of the society or culture within which the tradition is practiced. Thus, while you and I are forbidden the carving up of corpses, medical students work on cadavers as a matter of course and with impunity.

The second source of privilege is the necessity for privacy. Privacy is accorded by society to (among others) confessors, lovers, mourners, and mentors and pupils, and all for the same reason: without it they cannot go about their business! Don Juan's instruction takes place on long walks in the desert chapparal. There he and his pupil can engage in their business without fear of intrusion. When don Juan at last confronts Castaneda in Mexico City, one has the impression that what is going on is supervised field work, the intention of which is to demonstrate the applicability and the efficacy of the classroom material in the real world. But the pedagogical environment of the mentor and the pupil remains a private one for the most part. The relationship demands it; the tradition requires it.

2. What is Expected of the Pupil?

The most dominant impression one has of don Juan's pedagogical style is that he continually teaches from Castaneda's experience, not at his pupil.

Very little is abstracted or related axiomatically. Almost everything learns, he learns by having the lesson happen to him. Don Juan insists that he cannot tell Castaneda anything; like Hegel's owl of Minerva,* he can only provide guidance and insight after the fact. The pupil learns not by listening to the mentor's lectures in the first instance, but by getting his hands dirty -- in the sculptor's clay, in the artist's pots of paint, in the lab, at the lathe.

Here Bacon's methodological dictum comes to the forefront: The truth emerges more readily from error than from confusion. Time after time don Juan repeats the same pattern. He sets up an experience for his pupil, refusing to tell him beforehand what will happen. Castaneda goes through the experience, and only then is it interpreted to him, quite often on the basis of his mistakes. The first imperative directed at the pupil, then, is "try it; jump in."

The second expectation of the pupil is that he must be ready for the next stage of instruction. Contrary to what might be supposed, preparedness for the next stage does not necessarily mean complete and total mastery of the current one. In Castaneda's case, there were times when he was not self-consciously aware of what he had learned at one point until he had to cope with another problem at some later time. Only then did he realize that he "knew it all along." In this case, "ready" is a judgment made by the mentor on the basis of what he knows about what lies ahead, on the basis of the pupil's performance to date, and confidence in the pupil's capacities. Readiness here is not so much a matter of mastery as a disposition to attempt. The pupil's readiness is marked by several criteria:

(1) s/he has courage even if s/he lacks full competence,

(2) s/he exhibits a creditable performance at lower instructional levels,

*"One more word about giving instruction as to what the world ought to be. Philosophy in any case always comes on the scene too late to give it...The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk." G.W.F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, Tr. T.M. Knox, New York: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 13.

(3) the pupil knows both how to follow and how to deviate creatively from instruction,

(4) the pupil is able to focus attention on the unknown rather than on the known, on the gaps in the wall instead of the bricks that make it up.

An athletic example may serve to illustrate. The tennis coach may speed up the delivery or alter the spin of his serve to the neophyte because he is able to observe strength, coordination and timing of which the beginning player is unaware. While the judgment remains with the mentor, the readiness has to be in the pupil or instruction cannot progress.

A third expectation which don Juan had of Castaneda was that he continually recapitulate his experiences. Castaneda had few problems here, since he was nearly always anxious to discuss what had happened to him. It is interesting to note that don Juan is seldom interested in Castaneda's interpretations, still less in questions which are generated from his purely rational world view. Don Juan's role in these recapitulations is always to help his apprentice to focus on the appropriate details of feelings and perceptions, to separate wheat from chaff. The pupils' interpretations, because they are generated out of an inadequate frame of reference, are really beside the point. What counts is what happened and what the mentor, because of his greater experience and knowledge, knows to be significant.

Recapitulation in the mentor/pupil relationship serves four purposes. By finding out what Castaneda notices in what happened to him, don Juan is able to conduct a formative evaluation of his pupil's acuity and to help keep him from getting sidetracked on irrelevant issues. In this way a proper perspective is maintained; both observational and technical skills are sharpened. This leads to the second function of recapitulation: It coalesces experience and technique for the pupil. By telling and retelling his story to the mentor, the pupil constructs a manageable gestalt from the welter of discrete experiences that

would otherwise overwhelm him. Third, recapitulation serves to clarify what the real questions are, both in terms of what continues to puzzle the pupil and in terms of what the mentor knows needs to be asked. Depending on the form and content of the question, a decision can be reached to repeat a similar experience or exercise (the pupil missed the point), construct an alternative experience or exercise (what is now only fuzzily apprehended can be focused and clarified), or to progress to the next stage (point made and taken) (cf. Tales of Power, pp. 249 ff). Finally, recapitulation is an exercise in paradigm building.* It is a means by which the pupil (with the mentor's interpretative aid) succeeds in constructing a new scheme of orientation, new rules of conduct, and a rearrangement of the data experienced according to a different conceptual order. This conceptual shift is one of the primary goals of the mentor/pupil relationship. As don Juan puts it to

> The first act of a teacher is to introduce the idea that the world we think we see is only a view, a description of the world. Every effort of a teacher is to prove this point to an apprentice. (Tales of Power, p. 231)

A fourth expectation of the pupil is that of skill gathering. We are accustomed to think of this piece of business as central to the whole mentor/pupil relationship. To a certain extent it is, but not in the way we think; skill gathering is ancillary to the main tasks, which are the production of a new and different human being and the perpetuation of a tradition.

*I am using "paradigm building" here in the sense that it is used by Thomas S. Kuhn in his seminal book, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964). Writing as an historian of science, Kuhn argues that the history of science may best be explained by elaborating patterns of change in basic models of conceptualization, whereby old patterns or paradigms are rejected in favor of new ones when sufficient data accumulates which cannot be explained in terms laid down by existing models. A paradigm shift occurs in the pupil's outlook when sufficient data is provided from the world of the mentor to force him to stop thinking in old ways. Thus, a philosophy student begins to think philosophically, the law student learns to approach things according to the framework of legal thought, the neophyte artist perceives things according to the canons of light, color, line, perspective, texture, etc.

A good illustration of the ancillary nature of skills is provided by don Juan. At the end of the apprenticeship, he explained to Castaneda that he had taught him a particular way of walking, not because a particular gait was more conducive to sorcery, but because the concentration required blocked off the internal dialogue of the apprentice (trying to figure things out), flooding the tonal, and producing the internal silence which made the apprentice teachable (Tales of Power, p. 232).

Skills are important in and of themselves, for without them the pupil cannot become a master in his or her own right. But the skills, like both the mentor and the pupil, take their place within the larger context of the tradition whose servants they are.

The ancillary and derivative nature of the skills don Juan taught Castaneda conflicts with conventional notions of how mentoring, or teaching in general, should proceed. We are accustomed to the notion that one grows in a particular field or area of competence by accretion, proceeding from the simple to the more complex, always building on what has gone before in a sort of straight line fashion. While there is some truth in this, it is only a half-truth. The general question of method is a case in point. The full fledged historian knows that historical method and the techniques of treating with evidence are absolutely central to his task. Yet when s/he introduces a group of college freshmen to "history" s/he does not begin with method but with a particular history of a nation or period. Once initiated, the apprentice historians begin to acquire skills one by one, not just because they are prerequisites to achieve the status of the trained practitioner, but primarily because they are necessary to solve a particular concrete problem that has come up - and no one can predict the order of appearance of these problems. It is the business of becoming an historian (or sorcerer) that comes first, not skill mastery. The latter derives from the former; the

former does not produce the latter.

This brings us to the final expectation of the pupil. The all encompassing goal of the mentor-pupil relationship is for the pupil to change his way of life. All of the other expectations are geared to produce this single end. Changes in perception of the world, preparedness, recapitulation and the gathering of skills all work together to make the pupil over into someone new. At the end of the process, s/he can no longer think of the self in the same way. It is transmuted. Appellations like "doctor," "attorney at law," "master carpenter," etc. are mnemonic devices which bear witness to this fact. Don Juan tells Castaneda:

> I've told you countless times that a most drastic change was needed if you wanted to succeed in the path of knowledge. That change is not a change of need, or attitude, or outlook; that change entails the transformation of the island of the tonal," (i.e., the rearrangement of the perception of the self in the sensible world). (Tales of Power, pp. 226-7)

The mentor/pupil relationship produced in Castaneda a kind of "Before and After" phenomenon that looks something like this:

BEFORE	AFTER
1. Knows the sensible world only	1. Can see into and use the unknown
2. Dominated by reason	2. Able to use both reason and will
3. "Looks"	3. "Sees"
4. Self-indulgent	4. "Impeccable warrior"
5. Ordinary man	5. "Man of knowledge"

In its purest form what is produced in the pupil is something akin to a conversion experience. "Conversion" means a double turning, away from one direction

and toward another. This is precisely what occurs in the pupil. Life gets turned around. Priorities get reordered. Perception is changed because of a difference in goals. A new person emerges.

Such a notion immediately raised the hackles of many liberal educators, for they are unaccustomed to think of education's primary goal as the transformation of a human life. But that is precisely what is at stake if we are prepared to be honest about it. Professional, vocational and academic directions or intentions color the whole person. Apprentices, students and trainees internalize values, behavioral characteristics, role expectations, and entire world views which change them. The only question here is whether this process of change is to be done willy-nilly or intentionally. Regretably, too much teaching and mentoring lacks intentionality of the sort we are talking about, thus enabling teachers and mentors to disclaim responsibility for the end product in terms of human lives. But not to decide is still to decide; shifting the burden of responsibility does nothing to help solve the problem or improve the process.

3. Responsibilities of the Mentor

Since all teaching is a form of advocacy, the mentor is first an advocate. Don Juan is a particularly compelling advocate of the "path of knowledge." His very life is an argument in behalf of what he has become. In setting before his pupil the path of a man of knowledge as a desirable one, he does not minimize its risks or arduousness; rather, he insists, the difficulties themselves are testimony to its worthiness. The fact that the mentor has chosen a particular way of life speaks and stands for something. He considers it desirable and rewarding and capable of producing results which are not available to him elsewhere. But while an advocate he is not necessarily a proselytizer. He is not out to make converts. "A teacher never seeks apprentices and no one can solicit the teachings," don Juan says (Tales of Power, p. 229).

What don Juan advocates is his tradition -- sorcery. As he points out to his pupil, sorcery is the most effective way of "arriving at the totality of one's self." The mentor is the proponent of a world view that totalizes, which at its best provides a referrent for any and all forms of human activity.

The mentor is also a model for the pupil. This is perhaps the most obvious of the mentor's functions, but it is an extremely subtle affair. Naturally, the pupil must copy the mentor. He learns appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, the care and use of materials and instruments, techniques and skills, and the world view into which all of these fit. But the mentor does not act as a model for the sake of these things primarily, for he knows that they are merely the outward manifestations of the inner reality which he espouses. Clothes do not make the man. The point of modeling, for the mentor, is to provide the pupil with activities which prepare him for something else entirely.

A moment's reflection demonstrates how this works. Don Juan lived the life of an "impeccable warrior," but in order for Castaneda to follow don Juan's example, he had to spend time repeating a host of routines which don Juan himself never engaged in, and thus these activities themselves could not be modeled. These activities nevertheless gradually altered Castandea's perceptual modes until he one day worked up to his own warrior status and could then see the connection between what he had been doing and what he had become. In like manner, Michaelangelo made it a practice to send his apprentices to work in the marble quarries in order to learn how to sculpt.

All of this is by way of saying that while the mentor may model directly, he is most effective when he models indirectly. No amount of Arthur Rubenstein's sitting down at a piano and saying, "Now, do as I do" will turn me into a concert pianist. Even if I could replicate the movement of his hands across the keyboard, I would never become a Rubenstein. What the mentor models is himself; what the

pupil must emulate is not the mentor's techniques but the vision of what he himself may become.

The mentor must also have a good sense of timing. He must know when to crack down and when to ease off. He has an eye and an ear, a sixth sense, for the "teachable moment." Such moments can come at many points: when the pupil has exhausted his own resources on a problem; when the pupil is in a particularly good mood; when thought or circumstance provide a particularly apt metaphor; when the pupil is unaware, has his guard down, or is otherwise vulnerable; when closure has been reached or is impending. Don Juan's phrase for this phenomenon was "my cubic centimeter of chance," by which he meant the exact moment when a particular act had to be performed in order to accomplish his ends. He exercised this sense of timing when he "grabbed (Castaneda) with his will" on their first encounter in order to apprentice him. His overall sense of timing also dictated the general pattern of the apprenticeship as a whole -- experience first, recapitulation, then interpretation.

The sense of timing naturally requires that the mentor be supremely aware of the pupil, his moods, learning style, progress, etc. Castaneda was thunderstruck when, just before he received his final initiation into sorcery, don Juan provided him with a five hour, minutely detailed description of everything don Juan had done to him since their first meeting (Tales of Power, p. 229). It was don Juan's sense of timing and this servanthood to the tradition that provided him with the knowledge that a final wrap-up was needed before the big game. The mentor learns timing by experience, of course, but also from the memory of his own apprenticeship.

A further aspect of the mentor's responsibility is the employment of planned, guided experiences. As has already been pointed out in the discussion of the pupil's role, experience is at the heart of learning rather than the simple ingestion of information. Whenever Castaneda was deemed ready for a new phase of

his training, don Juan took elaborate care to optimize the conditons and regulate the sequence of the learning event. The following is a generalized pattern drawn from many such events scattered through the four books:

(1) The experience was set up in accordance with a need, the source of which was either a question or confusion of the apprentice, or the mentor's assessment of what kind of experience had to be undergone in order to advance the training;

(2) The physical environment was considered supremely important to the success of the learning event and was carefully selected. Sites included don Juan's porch, an irrigation ditch near his house, the surrounding desert chapparal, nearby and distantly removed hilltops, a cave, a mesa, etc. In each case, don Juan chose the location most conducive to the particular lesson. He carefully chose the appropriate time of day, monitored the duration of the experience, gave instruction as to appropriate body positions, physical behaviors and the like;

(3) Once the learning experience is initiated, two factors come into play and interpenetrate each other. The experience itself is relegated to the pupil. He is not told what to think or how to assimilate what he is going through, although he may be given direct and specific instructions about what to look for, listen to, or concentrate on. Don Juan's role as a guide consists of giving these instructions and making sure no harm comes to the apprentice. Other than that, he's on his own;

(4) The initial assessment of the efficacy of the learning experience lies in the hands of the mentor. Pupil reaction shapes this assessment but in a secondary fashion;

(5) Immediacy of interpretation is also in the purview of the mentor. Sometimes he answers Castaneda's questions immediately; at other times he allows time for the lesson to sink in before permitting discussion.

These elements -- need, environment, guidance, assessment, and interpretation -- seem to form the pedagogical web don Juan uses as a teacher. It is not unlike other lists, drawn up by professional educators, which seek to delineate the essential factors in any educational exchange. What is significant about don Juan's style (and, I would argue, the mentor style generally) is that it proceeds on the assumption that one does not teach someone something by teaching that thing or item of information. Rather, his educational wager is that the student learns best when provided with experiences within which the data to be learned are present. This emphasis is highlighted in don Juan's style by his impatience with verbalization and his repeated injunction to Castaneda that his body knows more than his head if he will only trust it.

A close examination of don Juan's pedagogical style reveals that he invariably teaches from the world to the student. Mental constructs and conceptualizations are bothersome because they mediate what should be experienced and learned from directly. Readers familiar with Zen Buddhist practice will recognize in don Juan a kindred spirit, for he proceeds in much the same way as the Zen master, first by confounding the reason of his pupil (cf. Zen koans and their function) gradually stripping away all the buffers between the apprentice and his experience, while at the same time strengthening other receptive modes which will enable the apprentice to function in and beyond the "normal" world in more effective ways.

This is not to say that all mentoring begins in confounding the reason. It may be necessary in becoming a sorcerer or a Zen master but it would be disastrous for mentors and pupils of mathematics or philosophy! The point is that the pupil, in order to successfully master whatever tradition to which s/he aspires, has to move from one frame of reference and risk him/herself to another.

The mentor also provides a realistic appraisal of the pupil's progress. Don Juan runs the gamut here, all the way from "You did very well" to "You're dumb."

Such appraisals perform a double function. They tell the pupil how he's doing, whether by chastening or encouraging; they also serve as points of reference for the mentor's performance of the other functions appropriate to his own role. Pupil performance reflects back on the mentor.

The key issue here is the realism of the appraisal. This is, of necessity, generated out of the mentor's understanding of the total process and what is ultimately at stake. The pupil is in no position, particularly in the early stages of the relationship, to assess the competencies needed. Thus, don Juan can tell Castaneda that he already knows what to do in certain situations, even though his pupil is not self-consciously aware that he has the knowledge. Don Juan is assessing from the standpoint of the seasoned observer.

The mentor also trains toward the prediliction or "bent" of the individual student, permitting the student his or her own modes of learning. This characteristic is a special case of the general notion discussed above, that cases alter circumstances. What it really means is that the tradition being communicated has no way of emerging except in the particularity of the student's mode. The mentor is not, or at least should not be, interested in producing a carbon copy of himself. What is most important is that the student achieve his or her own mode of self-expression. In the service of this particular goal the mentor is aware of personality quirks, strengths and weaknesses, habits, and personal disposition. He captures their energy for the learning process.

In cases where the predisposition of the pupil is inimical to progress in the teaching, it has to be subverted by taking advantage of its energy and then redirecting it. This was the case with Castaneda's "self-pity":

> Don Juan asked me to tell him what had been the most natural reaction I had in moments of stress, frustration and disappointment before I became an apprentice. He said his own reaction had been wrath. I told him mine had been self-pity.
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> ...

> Take self-pity for instance," he said. "There is no way to get rid of it for good; it has a definite place and character in your island (life), a definite facade which is recognizable. Thus, every time the occasion arises, self-pity becomes active. If you then change the facade of self-pity, you would have shifted its place of prominence....It was useful to you.... (but through the use of certain sorcerer's techniques) you have denied use to self-pity; in order for self-pity to work you had to feel important, irresponsible, and immortal. When those feelings were altered (by the techniques) it was no longer possible for you to feel sorry for yourself (Tales of Power, pp. 236-7).

The mentor's adjustment of his teaching to the student's peculiar nature also enables him to make things explicit in such a way that what is learned is congruent with that nature. He can have respect for the pupil's questions even when they are inappropriate because he knows, as current parlance has it, where the pupil "is coming from." He is in the enviable position of builuing on his student's strengths rather than in the unenviable one of training him out of bad habits.

One may well ask about the latent conflict between the mentor's task of changing the pupil's frame of reference and gearing the pupil's training toward his personal predilection or bent. This is a difficult question and its resolution can be arrived at by reference to several strategies. First, when the mentor discovers certain aspects of his pupil's personality or disposition which will eventually disqualify him if he does not change, he may: (1) train them out of the pupil, (2) find some way of converting their energy toward behavior more congruent with the tradition, (3) compensate in some other way. This was don Juan's problem with Castaneda and he met it by using a combination of (1) and (2).

Second, the pupil may be so burdened by the conflict that he disqualifies himself, or third, the mentor may despair and disqualify the pupil. In this instance the conflict is not resolved but simply terminated or aborted.

Another mode of resolution of such conflicts results in the revolt of the pupil against the mentor and the setting up of a counter-institution or school. Karl Jung and Wilhelm Reich did this in respect to their joint mentor, Freud, while retaining their ties to the same tradition.

The key to the management of this conflict, if the relationship between don Juan and Castaneda is a reliable guide, lies in maintaining a creative tension between the requirements of the tradition and the bent of the student. The tension must be deflected from the struggle of each to maintain his own position within the relationship and directed toward a change of the relationship itself. The mentor must train the pupil toward competency and the full development of his or her own modes of reception and expression of the tradition, while at the same time according the pupil the right to develop his or her own framework for carrying on the tradition. Another way of putting it would be to see the goal of the apprenticeship as a kind of parity. Such a process requires certain attitudes on the part of the mentor: (1) a non-defensive stance, (2) a belief that the tradition will be enriched when the deviance of the pupil emerges as a contribution to a healthy pluralism which enlivens, (3) a willingness to "let go" or "let be," allowing the passage of time and the power of the tradition itself to temper, clarify or resolve the tensions, and (4) a trust in the level of commitment of the apprentice. At one point or another don Juan manifests all of these attitudes toward Castaneda, particularly (3) and (4), to sustain their relationship and help change it toward one of parity in which the mentor could recognize and validate the pupil as a colleague "warrior" and "man of knowledge."

The mentor also teaches by indirection. Don Juan's technique of teaching by indirection ranged all the way from having Castaneda perform seemingly mindless chores to full blown duplicity. Castaneda recalls how he was taught selflessness by indirection:

> He (don Juan) reminded me of all the nonsensical, joking tasks that he used to give me every time I had been at his house. Absurd chores such as arranging firewood in patterns, encircling his house with an unbroken chain of concentric circles drawn in the dirt with my finger, sweeping debris from one place to another, and so forth. The tasks also included acts I had to perform by myself at home, such as wearing a black cap, or tying my left shoe first, or fastening my belt from right to left.
>
> The reason I had never taken them in any other vein except as jokes was that he would invariably tell me to forget them after I had established them as regular routines.
>
> As he recapitulated all the tasks he had given me I realized that by making me perform senseless routines he had indeed implanted in me the idea of acting without really expecting anything in return. (Tales of Power, p. 233).

But don Juan also used duplicity to teach. Castaneda learned at the end of the apprenticeship that there had, indeed, been many instances when his mentor had deliberately rigged situations which purported to teach one thing yet which had another intent entirely. The outstanding incident of this nature was don Juan's structuring of an encounter between Castaneda and the woman sorceress, la Catalina. Castaneda risked his life in this encounter because don Juan had led him to believe that she was after don Juan's life and that he himself was incapable of self-defense without help. After the contact don Juan revealed that the whole thing had been a set up, designed to sharpen Castaneda's warrior skills and to force his choice between the warrior's world and the ordinary world (Tales of Power, p. 242). Castaneda was furious, but don Juan explained himself:

> If we wouldn't be tricked, we would never learn. The same thing happened to me, and it'll happen to anyone. The art of the benefactor is to take us to the brink. A benefactor can only point the way and trick. I tricked you before. You remember the way I recaptured your hunter's spirit, don't you? You yourself told me that hunting made you forget (your obsession with psychotropic) plants. You were willing to do a lot of things in order to be a hunter, things you wouldn't have done in order to learn about plants. Now you must do a lot more in order to survive. (Journey to Ixtlan, p. 257).

Most of us are inclined to see the wisdom of indirection as a pedagogical device, yet we balk at outright deception. All of us have had the experience of being taught one thing in the guise of another and recognize it as the skill of a really good teacher. The child learns consideration for others under the guise of the seemingly mindless routines of acquiring "good table manners." The graduate student is trained in the mind set of a different culture through the mastery of the declensions and conjugations of its language. "Grace" is learned not from the tortured logic of the pastor's sermons but because of his attitude and bearing toward his parishoners in time of trial.

But what is don Juan's trickery if not the principle of indirection written in capital letters? We have some experience of this, too, although not in such a blatant form. The successful coach is noted for his ability to "trick" his team into believing that every game is a matter of do or die. The point of this kind of trickery, however, must be that it is done for the pupil's benefit and not at his expense. There is a payoff, but not the expected one.

The mentor's strategy of trapping the attention of the pupil by pushing him beyond the realm of ordinary circumstances and into the world governed by the tradition is in itself a kind of teaching by indirection, a type of deception which has its own necessity. This "context disarrangement," as Castaneda calls it, serves to focus attention on all elements in the new situation, and particularly on the modeling behavior of the mentor, quite simply because the student does not know the ropes (Tales of Power, p. 235). Indirection and "trickery" can be very effective mentoring strategies because they divert and capture attention at the same time, so that the learning "takes" without the depletion of energy that comes from fighting battles on the wrong front.

As to the ethics of such a procedure, mentors will have to make up their own minds. Its effectiveness is, I believe, demonstrable, but arguing that

the end justifies the means is notoriously bad ethics. In one sense, such practices are certainly manipulative, and when misused, lead to a breakdown of trust between mentor and pupil. Perhaps the best counsel is that they be used strategically and sparingly, i.e., they may not be used as a matter of course but only for specific purposes and only to the extent necessary. Don Juan himself justified the "trick" involving la Catalina on the grounds that he had given Castaneda plenty of opportunity to assess "the consequences of your choice and plenty of time to decide whether or not to make it" (Tales of Power, p. 242). At some point the pupil also has to be let in on the deception, for not to do so would run the risk of breeding a false consciousness which will eventually collapse of its own weight.

The final responsibility of the mentor which emerges from an examination of don Juan's pedagogy is what might be called the structuring of the creative pause. Many writers and students of creativity seem to agree that truly creative and original thought and production follow a process comprised of the following steps:

1. The person is faced with a problem.
2. Hypotheses are advanced as to its solution and alternatives are attempted.
3. When these are exhausted the person arrives at a form of "stuckness" beyond which s/he cannot go.
4. The problem is put on "hold" or abandoned. Other activity crowds in and preoccupies the mind.
5. Unbidden, a flash of insight occurs.*
6. The insight is applied and found to work.

Don Juan's method of structuring the creative pause was to encourage a kind of reverse perception in his pupil. He taught him "not doing," a technique involving concentration on shadows and the spaces between objects rather than on objects themselves, on the silences between sounds instead of the sounds

*For an intriguing illustration and discussion of this process, see Robert M. Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, (New York: Bantam Books, 1975, pp. 252-63.) See also Arthur Koestler, The Act of Creation, (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1964) for a full treatment.

themselves (Journey to Ixtlan, p. 219-239). The upshot of the instruction was that by focusing his attention on what he normally would have overlooked, he was able to screen out extraneous perceptual material and free himself to be instructed from the "empty spaces." What he learned was that they were not in fact empty, but full. Robert Pirsig points to a similar state as the one don Juan attempted to create. He writes:

> Because we are unaccustomed to it, we don't usually see that there is a third possible logical term equal to yes and no which is capable of expanding our understanding in an unrecognized direction. We don't even have a term for it, so I'll have to use the Japanese Mu.
>
> Mu means 'nothing.' Like 'Quality,' it points outside the process of dualistic discrimination. Mu simply says, 'No class; not one, not zero, not yes, not no.' It states that the context of the question is such that a yes or no answer is in error and should not be given. 'Unask the question' is what it says. (Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, p. 314)

In structuring the creative pause it is the mentor's job to lead the pupil toward the possibility of the third term Pirsig is describing. The mentor has to assist the pupil in the creation of empty space and suspended time which can only be filled or set in motion by the pupil's own resources, which up to that point s/he is unaware of.

III.

Implications for Gifted Child Education

This then is the model of mentoring provided by one case study. It is not the only model possible. Some of the characteristics of this particular relationship may have been misread or misinterpreted, but our understanding of the inner workings of this relationship is greatly enhanced by this brief glimpse at the sorcerer and his apprentice. What emerges from this study as essential to the success of the mentor/student relationship are the referencing of both to the tradition, the anchoring of the pupil's learning in experience, and the mentor's

use of the pupil's predilection. Other characteristics of the relationship may be slighted, poorly nourished or even absent, but these remain central; without them neither mentor nor pupil can succeed.

What implications can be drawn about mentoring particularly for the education of the gifted and talented? First of all, mentor programs in gifted child education must be rooted in experiential learning. Non-verbal learning modes should be encouraged; emphasis should be on observation, perception, problem setting and solving. The learning environment must be structured around the practical tasks of the tradition into which the student is being initiated. To raise this point, of course, is not to say anything new, as anyone who has ever read John Dewey can testify. Yet mentoring is a special case in experiential learning because there is the danger that the mentor will come to think of him/herself, vis à vis the pupil, as an educator first and a practitioner second, and thus fall prey to the educator's chief vice -- verbalism. Both mentors and pupils need to be encouraged to trust what happens in the relationship and common experience over what either may have to say about it.

To some degree the balance on this issue will be tipped by the nature of the tradition itself. There is less to say and more to experience about dancing, for example, than about the law. Yet even in the case of the legal tradition an afternoon observing in court is worth more than a week embroiled with law books. A night in jail is worth volumes on penology. A walk-on part in an amateur theatrical production is a better education in theatre than the most learned lecture on Shakespeare.

Second, there are implications about the selection process for mentor programs. There are several layers here which have to be taken into consideration, and all the more care must be taken because these layers interpenetrate each other. Usually there are three steps:

1. The student is selected for the program. Selection will most certainly involve criteria such as interest, motivation, demonstrated ability to learn in independent settings, the ability to get along with others (particularly adults), the ability to respond to direction or flourish in its absence, and the ability to learn from experience -- plus already having been identified as gifted to get into the program in the first place.

2. The mentor is selected for the program, or perhaps cajoled, convinced, browbeaten, or otherwise solicited. Criteria for selection will include willingness to commit time, enthusiasm, competence, flexibility, empathic qualities, etc. Our examination of the mentor shows, however, that some other criteria need to be taken into consideration: commitment to a tradition and its life, probity of judgment, lack of defensiveness, ability to model, and sense of timing.

3. Mentor and pupil are matched, usually by the program coordinator. This is inadequate. Some further suggestions are that mentors might be invited to stipulate criteria for student selection, or that mentors themselves interview and make selections. They might also be invited to make nominations of participants beyond the pre-selected population chosen according to existing program criteria. Pupils might be invited to select mentors with whom they would like to work. The importance of "matching," however, applies not only to the bringing together of two people, but also to the conjunction of a teaching style and a learning style. These are naturally diverse, which means that care should be taken in interviewing both mentors and pupils to insure compatibility. A mentor who is highly verbally oriented as a teacher should not be mismatched with a visually oriented learner.

These suggestions regarding mentor/pupil selection derive from a point which emerges from Castaneda's apprenticeship: both mentor and pupil to some degree select each other in the context of a commitment which is being shaped (in the

case of the pupil) or is already formed (in the case of the mentor). This is a difficult matter to assess, yet ways of discerning the signs and symbols of the commitment must be found if the relationship is to work. That commitment need not be permanent to be valid, but it must be genuine in order to be validated. This is a matter to be worked out by the mentor and the pupil.

Third, mentoring programs for the gifted will have to be, by the nature of what we hope will happen in them, openended. Both Mentor and pupil must be free to allow what happens between them to run its course without regard to programmatic and administrative considerations. The good fight on this issue will have to be fought not by the mentor or the pupil, but by the program coordinator, whose job it is to create space and time in their behalf.

These considerations about space and time naturally raise a third question about accountability. The primary structure of accountability is the one which is intrinsic to the mentor/student relationship and not the accountability of each to the sponsoring program or school system. What we tend to forget is that our educational system exists for the purpose of equipping young people to assume their rightful places in the society and culture, i.e., while there may be goals attached to the educational enterprise, those goals are themselves derived from larger social and cultural imperatives. The mentor/student relationship references itself to these larger goals first; only secondarily does it reference itself to the exigencies of the educational system itself. These primary and secondary reference points will at times come into conflict, and the resolutions of such conflicts will not be easy. Nevertheless, the privileged character of the mentor/pupil relationship is worth maintaining and struggling for. It is its only defense against corruption.

A fourth implication for gifted child education is that both instruction and evaluation will necessarily be competency based rather than norm based. This

is already a clear direction which has been taken in much gifted child education, so very little needs to be said about it here. But some attention should be drawn to a distinctive feature of the pupil's experience to show the necessity of proceeding in this way. If the expectations of the pupil outlined above are near the mark, only a moment's reflection is necessary to uncover the foolishness of trying to instruct the pupil in changing his or her way of life or altering the experiential frame of reference. S/he can be led to experience that or be shown what it would be like to think and live in a different way, but it does not seem to me that this quality can be taught the way chemical formulae or dates of history can be taught. As to evaluating, that is done on the basis of assessing competencies as measured by the successful completion of tasks, the mastery of techniques, the ability to structure problems and solve them according to the canons of the tradition being explored.

Mentor programs in gifted child education are only now in their infancy. But they are on the rise and we have every right to be hopeful that they will become more and more prevalent. But mentoring itself, as we have seen, is not in its infancy. It has a long, venerable and productive history. We can only hope that our re-discovery of it will enable us to echo the words of T. S. Eliot:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time...
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> -Little Gidding

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